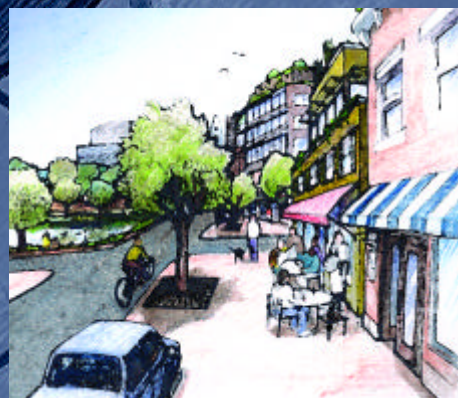


# PROJECT PROFILE



## Whittier Peninsula Redevelopment Columbus, Ohio

Department of Development



Mayor Michael B. Coleman

July 28, 2005



## I. Location:

The Whittier Peninsula is approximately 160 acres of land bounded by Interstate 70, the bend of the Scioto River, and the CSX and Norfolk Southern railroad tracks. It is part of the Brewery District a neighborhood located south of, and adjacent to, downtown Columbus.

The Brewery District is an architectural review area. Commission approval is required for exterior renovations, demolitions and new construction. Land uses in the Brewery District include entertainment venues and offices, supplemented by existing and actively expanding residential (apartment and condominium) uses.



## **II BACKGROUND:**

Adopted by Columbus City Council in 1998, the Riverfront Vision is a long-range plan to develop and renew nine miles of the Olentangy and Scioto riverfront. It provides an overall framework for redevelopment of the Whittier Peninsula, including the following important objectives:

- ◆ Protection and enhancement of the riparian edge and wildlife habitat;
- ◆ A roughly 50/50 split between public parkland-open space development and traditional neighborhood development;
- ◆ Improved connections to the Brewery District;
- ◆ Public access along the shoreline via parkland and trails; and
- ◆ Secondary vehicular access onto the peninsula

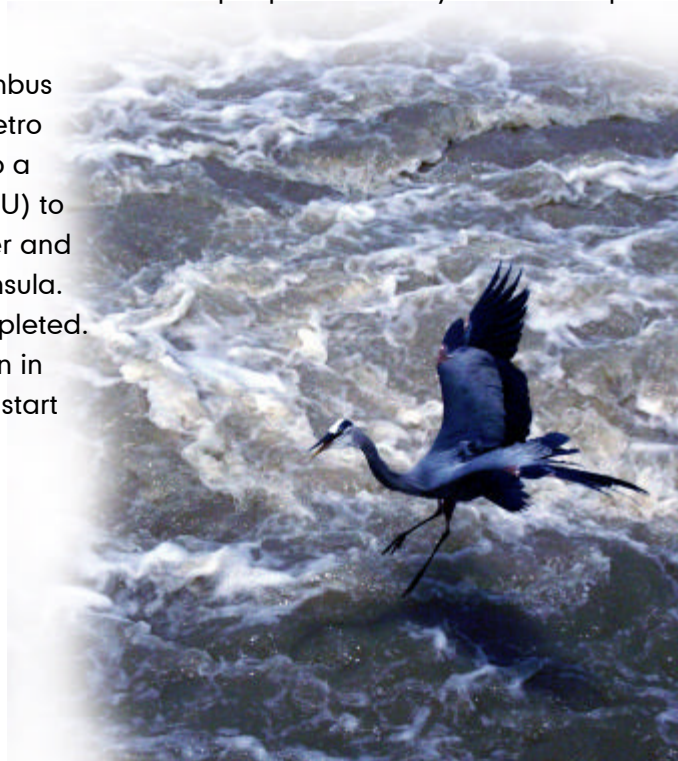
These objectives, as well as others contained in the plan, provide the basis for making land use and development decisions.

In the spring of 2003, the city of Columbus Recreation and Parks Department, Metro Parks and Audubon Ohio entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to jointly develop an urban nature center and park on a portion of the Whittier Peninsula. The park concept plan has been completed. The design and engineering will begin in early 2005, and park construction will start

at the north end. Audubon plans to open their nature center to visitors and students in 2008.

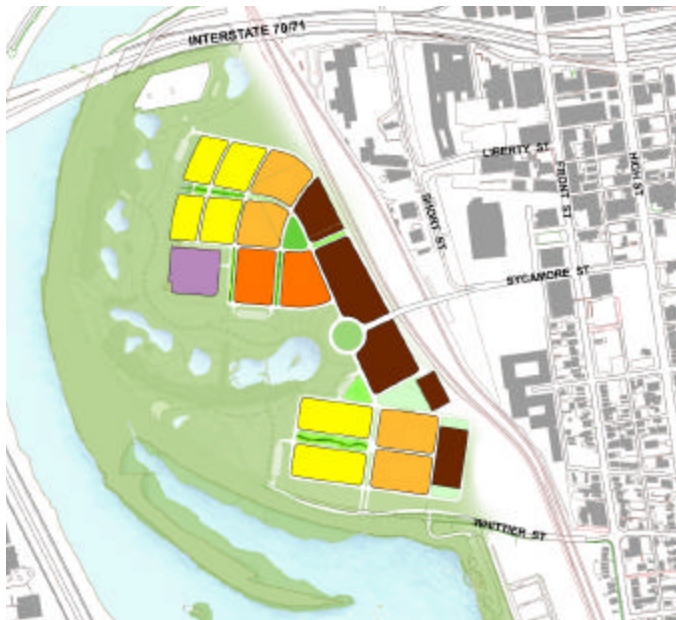
The park project represents an exciting, collaborative effort. It will reclaim and transform a portion of an abused, industrial Brownfield into a vibrant natural setting, and do so within one of the most urbanized areas of the city. From an environmental and development aspect, the impact will be profound.

Future Whittier residents will have immediate access to an 80-acre parkland featuring nature trails, grass lawns for picnicking and playing, and access to a regional trail system. The centerpiece of the park will be the Audubon nature center and a chain of constructed wetlands -- culminating in pond of reclaimed and cleansed water that people can safely touch and splash.



Great Blue Heron as seen from the Whittier Peninsula.

### III. REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPT:



Redevelopment Concept

In keeping with the Riverfront Vision, redevelopment of the Whittier Peninsula will be divided between parkland and a new, mixed-use neighborhood developed at urban densities.

The neighborhood is expected to be a relatively high-density, neo-traditional community. Residential and commercial densities are expected to be high to offset, in part, infrastructure and redevelopment costs. Residential densities are expected to reflect those of other new area developments and range from 15 to 80 or more dwelling units per acre. In addition, the Riverfront Vision recommends the construction of 150,000 to 200,000 square feet of neighborhood-scale office/ commercial uses. The Redevelopment Concept identifies approximately 70-plus acres for redevelopment, another 80-plus acres for parkland use, with approximately 10 acres reserved for use by the city's Department of Public Utilities.

The close physical relationship between the parkland and neighborhood areas creates a tremendous opportunity to showcase development practices that are both cost effective and environmentally responsible. Whittier redevelopment will feature best practices in the area of Sustainable/Green Development, ranging from home energy savings, storm water mitigation and sensitive landscape treatments --to waste reduction, material rescue and recycling. The application of these development principles will add value to the properties constructed and open a new residential market niche in Central Ohio.

The eastern third of the Lazarus furniture warehouse is being preserved for adaptive reuse and to serve as a showpiece for the future neighborhood's environmentally responsible design principles. The reuse of the building will provide a connection to the area's industrial past. For more information, please refer to the Lazarus Furniture Warehouse Profile.



Existing Lazarus warehouse.



Adaptive reuse and new construction.



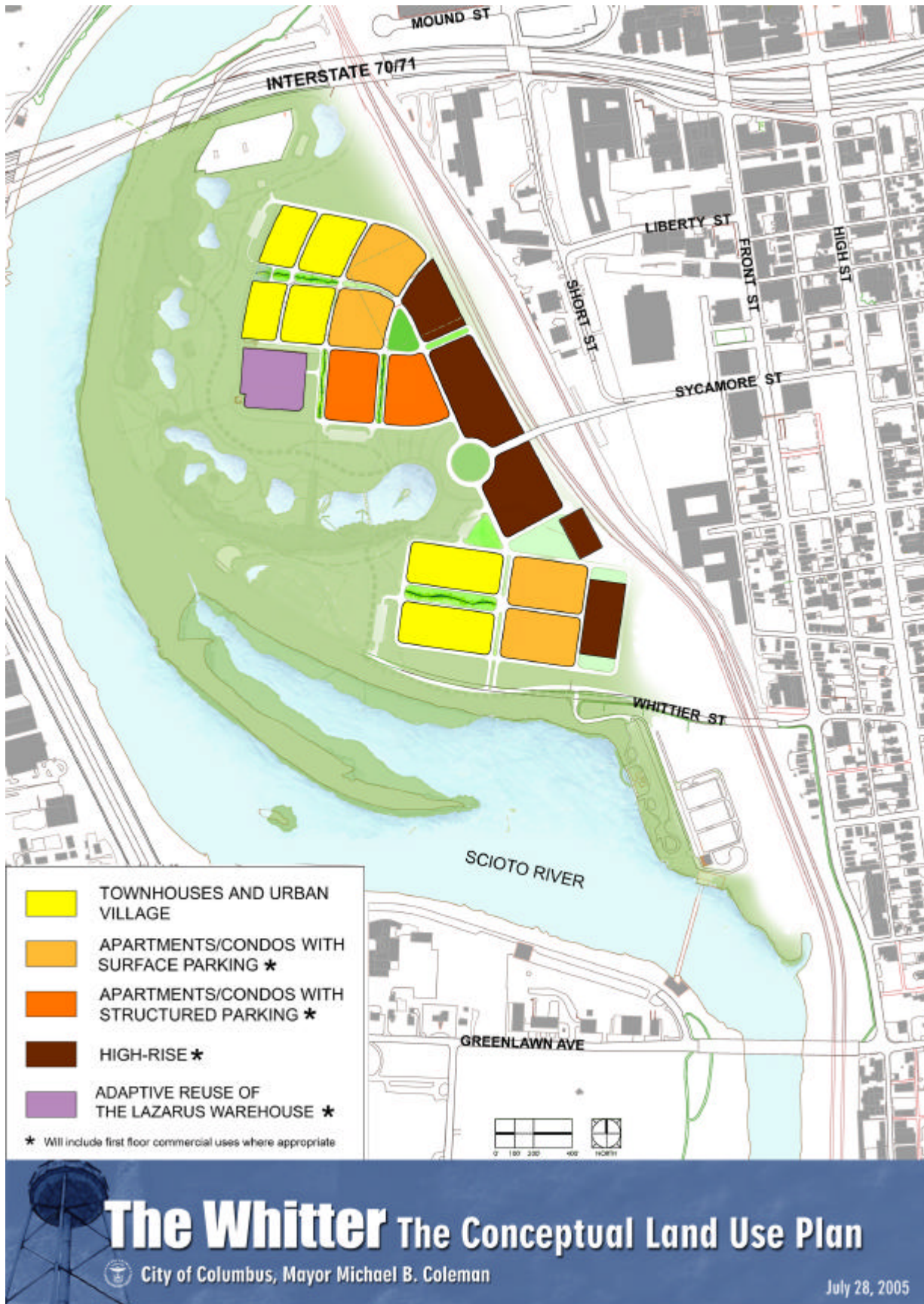


Figure 1A

## IV. LAND USE

### HISTORIC

Historic operations have all involved municipal, commercial/manufacturing and rail activity. Municipal uses included incineration, dumping and landfill operations. Among the commercial/manufacturing uses

were a steel works and foundry, as well as, machine shops and warehousing. Rail operations, in addition to transport, included a roundhouse, maintenance operations and a scrap yard.

### CURRENT

The city of Columbus controls all but one of the active land uses in operation on the Whittier. The city has a large impound lot operation and the Recreation and Parks Department (CRPD) maintains administrative offices, warehousing, and maintenance operations. Impound and CRPD operations will be relocated.

The Department of Utilities maintains two facilities here. The Electricity Division operates a substation at the north end of the Whittier near the Interstate. At the far south end of the site the Division of Sewerage and Drainage operates the Whittier Storm Tanks (WST). The WST is a facility for wastewater overflow and treatment for the city's combined sewer system. As an overflow outlet for the combined sewer system, the WST becomes overwhelmed in major rainfall events. On these occasions, the WST empties



wastewater directly in the Scioto River, south of the Greenlawn Dam. The city is in the process of preparing a plan to address combined sewer overflows into the Scioto and Olentangy Rivers. The plan will identify changes in the operations and physical plant of the WST operations.

## V. PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

### Phase II Environmental Study Findings

In the fall of 2002, an Environmental Audit of city land holdings was completed by DLZ Ohio, Inc. The results are as follows:

#### (1) Soil

- ◀ Arsenic levels exceeded Ohio VAP residential standards in over 50% of near surface soils sampled
- ◀ Lead samples exceeded Ohio VAP residential standards in isolated locations

#### (2) Ground Water

- ◀ Six wells were found to have ground water samples containing volatile and semi-volatile compounds exceeding Ohio VAP residential standards. Ground water impacts appear to be isolated to the immediate vicinity of these wells.

#### (3) Asbestos and Lead

- ◀ Former Lazarus Warehouse building has minimal asbestos containing materials and its steel structures and painted materials were found to contain lead-based paint

#### (4) Recommendations

- ◀ To mitigate potential environmental risk at the Whittier Peninsula properties, the Phase II Study recommends:
  - A soil mitigation plan to mitigate potential risk from elevated concentrations of Arsenic, Lead and semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs) in near surface soils.
  - Groundwater remediation in the vicinity of the test wells north of the former Lazarus warehouse.
  - Management of lead containing paint (LCP) wastes and asbestos abatement from the Lazarus warehouse.

### Geology

The soils on the Peninsula are classified as Urban Land and Genesee Complex that may be occasionally flooded. Vast areas of landfill exist as a result of waste disposal, development and flood control activities. The two types of fill are:

#### (1) Surface Fill

- ◀ Sand and Gravel make up the base/parking material at the impound lots
- ◀ Silts and clays make up the Whittier Avenue levee and areas with vegetative cover

#### (2) Underlying Fill (five to 25 feet in depth)

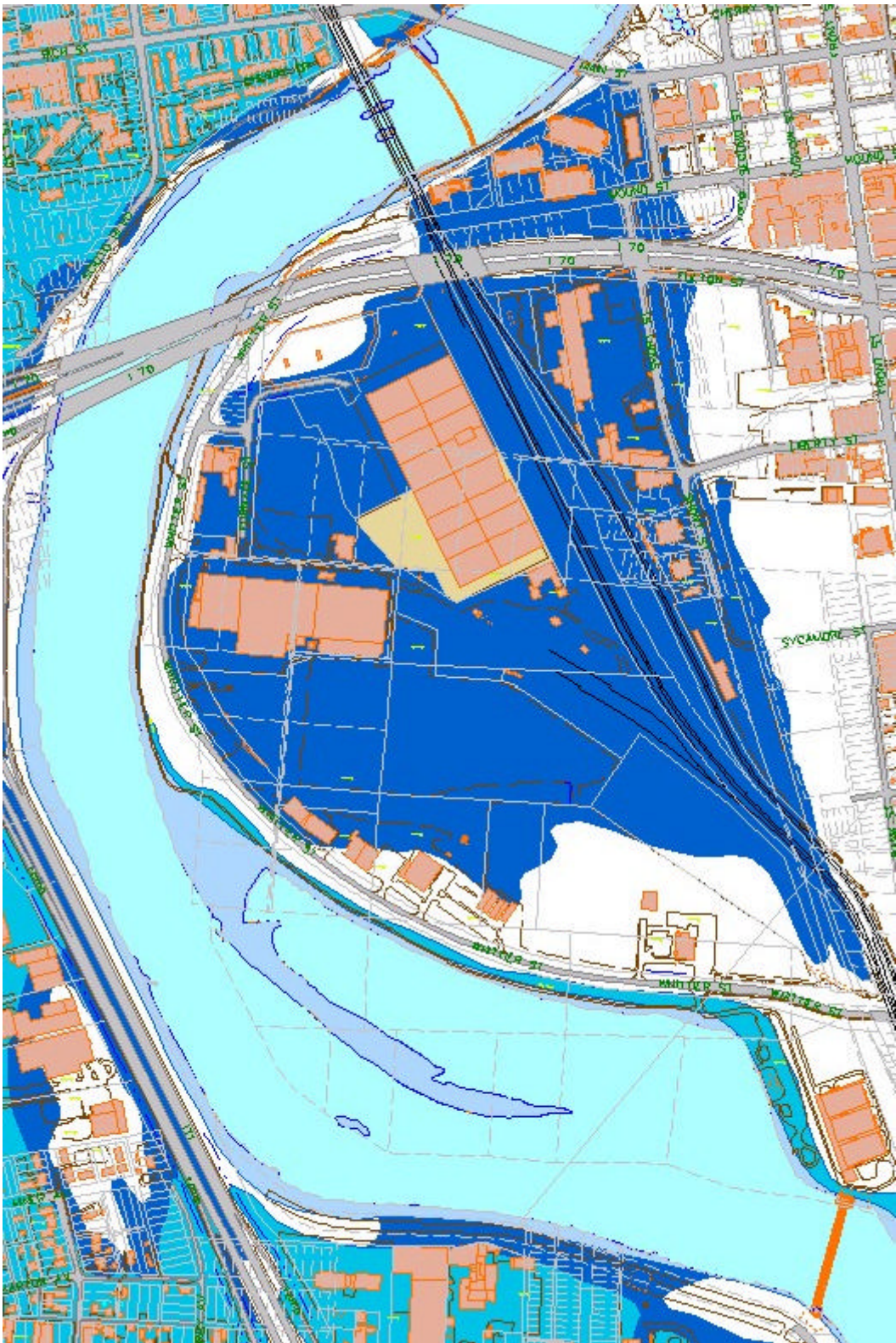
- ◀ Construction waste, demolition debris, and refuse debris such as brick, concrete, lime sludge, wood, etc.
- ◀ The fills are underlain by sand or sand and gravel outwash.

### Flood Plain

Recent mapping by FEMA has placed approximately 75% of the Whittier Peninsula in the 100-year flood plain (figure 1B and figure 1C). The base (100 year flood) elevation has been set at 717 feet. Recorded elevations on the Whittier range from isolated areas in the low 700's to high elevations in the upper-720's. Columbus City Codes require that the finished floor elevations of occupied levels of all buildings shall be 1-½ feet above the 100-year flood elevation (718 ½ feet). Areas of the Whittier outside of the 100-year flood plain include the southern impound lot, the location of the Recreation and Parks facility and Whittier Street.



V. PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS



100-year floodplain.

Figure 1B



## VI. REDEVELOPMENT ISSUES

### Metro Parks



### City Properties Inc.



### CSX Transportation



Land ownership.

### (1) Relocation of City Facilities

- ◆ It is anticipated that the city's Recreation and Parks Department will vacate their entire Whittier facilities by mid-to-late 2006.
- ◆ The city is working to secure a new location for the impound lot and associated operations by the end of this year, with the goal of opening a new lot late in 2006.

### (2) Department of Utilities Operations

- ◆ The city of Columbus delivered a Wet Weather Management Plan (WWMP) to the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency on July 1, 2005. The Plan is a comprehensive approach to improving the Columbus sewer system over the next 40 years. An intensive capital-

based improvement approach, the Plan will address, among other things, maintenance, long-term capacity issues and combined sewer and storm water overflows into waterways.

- ◆ As an interim control plan, a new sewer pipe will be built from the Whittier Street Storm Tanks (WSST) that will cross the Scioto River and follow the west riverbank southward to a wastewater treatment plant; it is to be completed by 2010. The wet weather storage capacity currently provided by the WSST is critical and will be maintained. However, it is expected that changes will be made to the physical plant and operations of the facility. Among the approaches being studied is the feasibility of placing the tanks underground.

## VI. REDEVELOPMENT ISSUES

- ◀ There are no plans to relocate the electric substation located at the north end of the site that is operated by Columbus Municipal Electric Power.
- ◀ For more information about the Wet Weather Management Plan, including an executive summary, go to:  
[http://utilities.ci.columbus.oh.us/sewers\\_drains/Project%20Clean%20Rivers.htm](http://utilities.ci.columbus.oh.us/sewers_drains/Project%20Clean%20Rivers.htm)

### (3) Land Assembly

- ◀ The city of Columbus is the principle property owner on the Whittier Peninsula, with the following three exceptions:
  - CSX Transportation, Inc./former Columbus Scrap
    - ▶ + 12 acres located centrally on the Peninsula near the railroad tracks at the end of Furnace Street. The city is actively negotiating the purchase this property.
  - City Properties, Inc./EV Bishoff
    - ▶ 371-391 Maier Place
    - ▶ + 7 ½ acres located in the north-eastern portion of the Peninsula, near the railroad tracks. Located on the property is a 200,000 square foot warehouse facility.
    - ▶ The warehouse shares a common wall with 347– 367 Maier Place, a vacant warehouse of equal size.
  - Metro Parks
    - ▶ 347-367 Maier Place
    - ▶ Purchased in Spring 2005
    - ▶ Warehouse facility to be demolished for future parkland and development

### (4) Environmental

- ◀ Summary of Environmental Site Assessment:
  - 1998 - Limited Voluntary Action Program (VAP) Phase I Property Assessment
  - 2002 - Preliminary VAP Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA)
  - 2004 - Initiation of supplemental VAP Phase I & II Property Assessment of the Northern Tier, by Burgess and Niple, Inc. for Metro Parks. The Northern Tier study area includes the Lazarus Warehouse site and all publicly owned properties north to I-70/71.
  - 2005 - VAP Phase I Property Assessment update of Southern Tier by Burgess & Niple, Inc. for the city of Columbus. The Southern Tier study area is comprised of all city-owned parcels south of the Lazarus warehouse building located between the railroad tracks and Whittier Street.
- ◀ Current Status
  - Northern Tier (Under the auspices of Metro Parks)
    - ▶ Phase I VAP property assessment criteria met
    - ▶ Phase II VAP property assessment criteria – samples collected and initial testing nearing completion; consultant service to continue through clean-up work to certify VAP attainment criteria for remediation (to parkland standards) and for the VAP Certified Professional to issue a “No Further Action (NFA) Letter,” to the OEPA on behalf of Metro Parks.



## VI. REDEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Once the letter has been accepted, the OEPA will issue a "Covenant Not to Sue" (CNS) for the property to Metro Parks.

- Southern Tier
  - ▶ Supplemental Phase II Environmental Site Assessment to be contracted by the city of Columbus in fall 2005. The Supplemental Assessment will address the following items:
    - ▲ Additional soil and ground-water test and analysis
    - ▲ A risk assessment for the Property
    - ▲ Assessing the lower ground-water zone and collecting a complete round of groundwater samples
    - ▲ Address VAP eligibility issues
    - ▲ Address background soil concentrations

### (5) I-70/71 South Innerbelt Study

- ◀ In 2008 the Ohio Department of Transportation plans to begin construction on a newly design I-70/71 south innerbelt



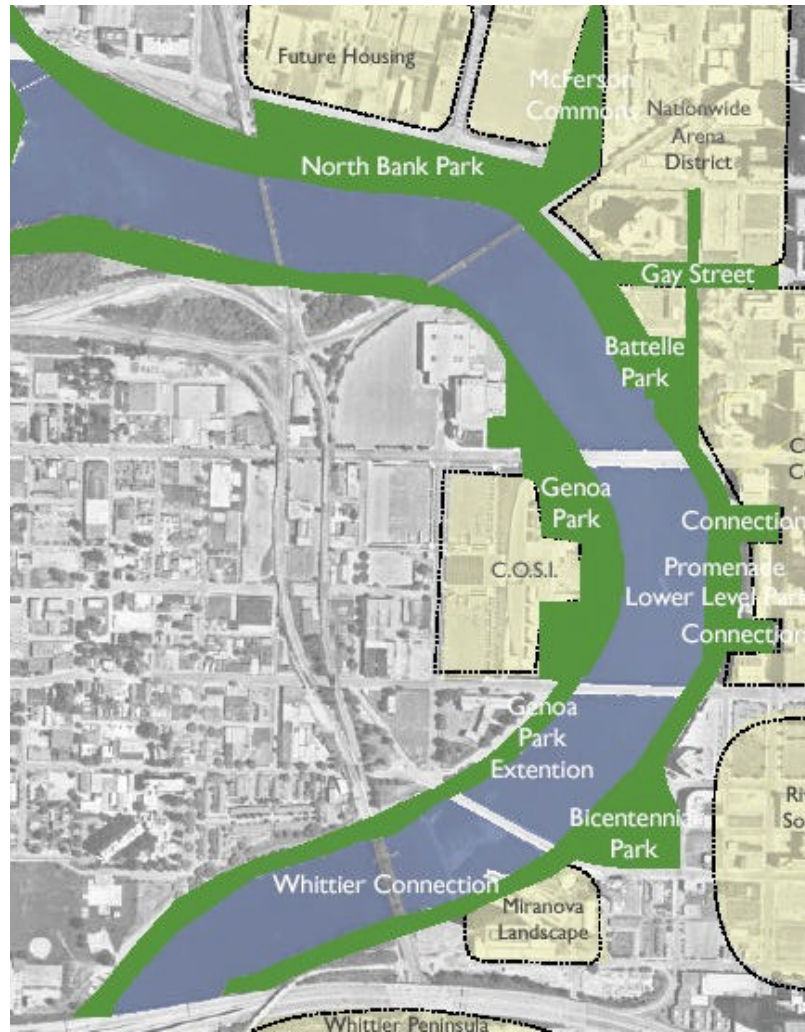
"split." The current I-70/71 configuration enters the south end of downtown Columbus from the west. The interstate crosses the Scioto River and borders the north end of the Whittier Peninsula.

- ◀ Four alternatives are under study and it is expected that the approach of the newly constructed interstate will widen as it crosses the river and enters the downtown. The exact footprint will not be determined until a final design alternative is selected sometime in February 2006.
- ◀ For more information go to:  
<http://www.dot.state.oh.us/7071study/stakeholder%20link.aspx>

## VII. CONTEXT

### Downtown Riverfront Investments

Over the next decade, the city of Columbus expects to invest over \$123 million in the downtown riverfront. The Whittier Peninsula is immediately south of downtown and it enjoys a direct link via the multi-purpose trail system. Funding and schedules are in place for the Main and Town Street Bridge replacement projects and it is anticipated that both bridges will be completed by the end of the decade. The Main Street Bridge, with its spectacular lighting, arches and pedestrian promenade will connect the Whittier with west bank attractions such as Center of Science and Industry (COSI), the Genoa Park Amphitheater, and the soon-to-be revitalized Dodge Park Recreation Center. In addition to the physical connection, Audubon has established a partnership with COSI to further strengthen the mission of environmental education. The stretch of the river flowing through downtown, recently coined as the Scioto Mile, will



The Scioto Mile

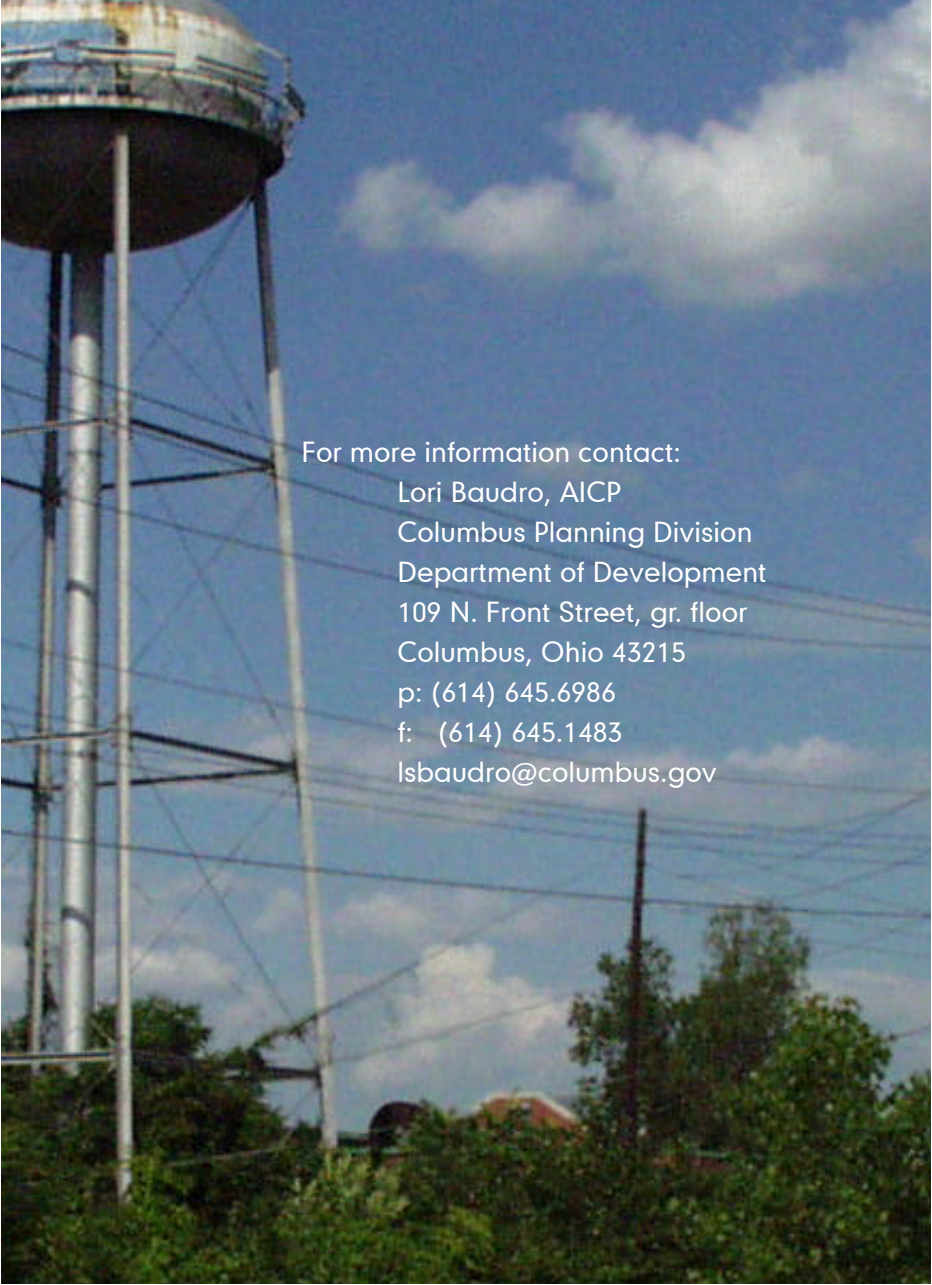
Columbus Downtown Development Corporation

include renovations to Bicentennial Park and completion of a river walkway system that will provide a convenient and enjoyable connection to downtown venues, the new North Bank Park, and other points north.



## VIII. CONTACT

## CONTACT



For more information contact:  
Lori Baudro, AICP  
Columbus Planning Division  
Department of Development  
109 N. Front Street, gr. floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
p: (614) 645.6986  
f: (614) 645.1483  
[lsbaudro@columbus.gov](mailto:lsbaudro@columbus.gov)